

## PROPOSED CORRIDOR AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

The study has identified access, traffic and safety issues and problems of the U.S 2 Corridor. In this chapter, both general and specific improvements within the study area are recommended.

### Service drives and shared access

Adjoining properties can consolidate driveways. This is especially effective on the narrow lots experienced in the cities of Ironwood and Bessemer. A number of driveways can be eliminated in Ironwood, by consolidating driveways, thereby reducing the number of conflict points and congestion. This will require a cooperative effort of property owners and existing businesses.

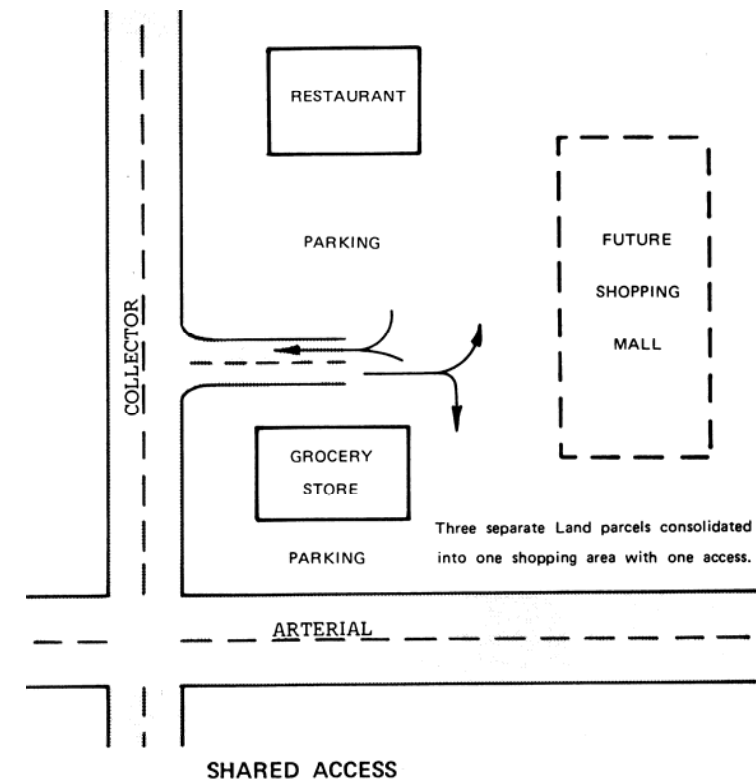
In addition to safety improvements, shared access has benefits for the businesses. Maintenance, snow plowing, and future reconstruction costs are spread among adjoining and benefiting property owners.

Service drives along the frontage or in the rear of properties should be encouraged where possible.

### Parking lot connections

Interconnecting parking lots is an easy way to improve access to businesses where a frontage road or service drive is not feasible. It is also effective along the intensely developed areas of the corridor. The benefit of parking lot connections is that customers can move between businesses without having to re-enter U.S. 2.

Figure 31. Shared Driveways and Connected Parking Lots



Source: *Arterial Street Access Control Study*, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 1981, p.24.



Limit new curb-cuts and driveways

Restricting the number and spacing of new driveways and curb-cuts is a local government decision that can greatly improve traffic safety and capacity of the roadway. This can be done through the local zoning ordinance and can be combined with other access management techniques including shared access points and access drives at the front or rear of properties. Generally, only driveway per lot should be allowed and access from an adjoining side street should be encouraged.

Restrict the number and size of new lots

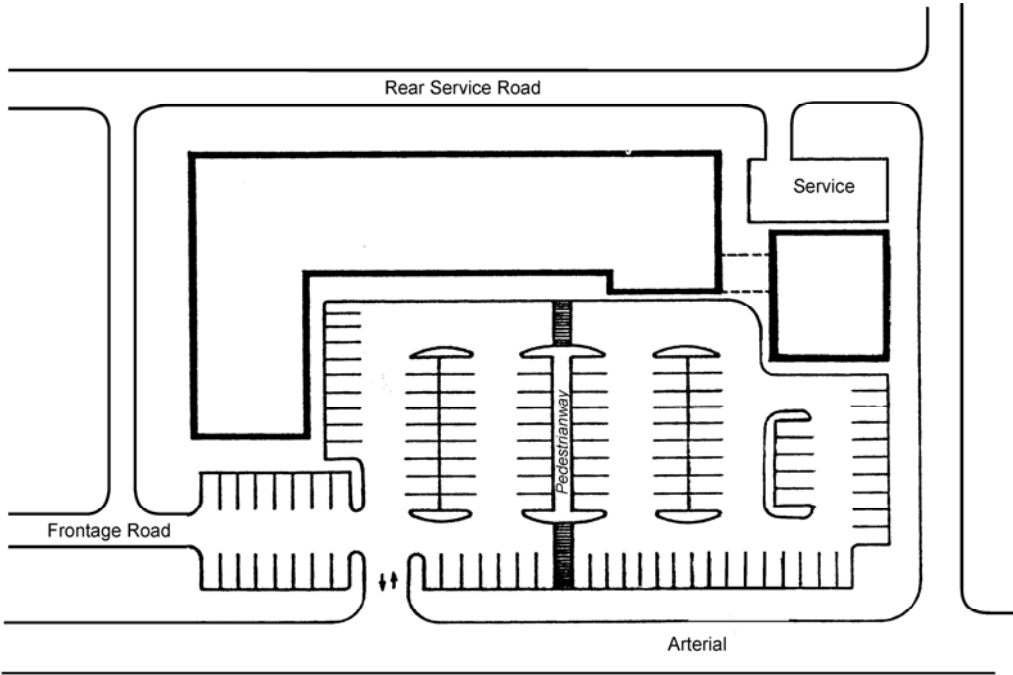
Larger lots can spread out the location of driveways in the rural segments of the U.S corridor. In existing developed areas, this may not be possible. Defining the allowable size of future land splits along the corridor can be done through the local zoning ordinance.

Table 3-2: Relationship of Driveway Density to Crash Rates

Driveways per Mile	Representative Crash Rate per Mile for a Multi-lane, Undivided Roadway	Increase in Crashes Associated with Higher Driveway Density
Under 20	3.4	-
20 to 40	5.9	+ 74%
40 to 60	7.4	+ 118%
Over 60	9.2	+ 171%

Source: MDOT Access Management Guidebook, 2001.

Figure 32. Frontage Roads and Rear Service Roads



Note: Rear access roads are usually safer and more effective than frontage roads and should be used whenever possible. Frontage roads should not be too close to the roadway or used where the volume of traffic is too great for safe vehicle use.

### **Convert existing center turn lane to grass median in the rural segments of corridor**

Once outside the urbanized areas of Bessemer and Ironwood, the number of driveways and curb-cuts decreases dramatically and the spacing between access points increases. The existing center turn lane is virtually non-functional in these areas with little use except at existing driveways, as evidenced by the photo at right which was taken following a minor snow event.

The Gogebic County community and MDOT may wish to consider converting the existing center lane to a grass median in the future during the design of an overall reconstruction project. Combined with the other access management controls being recommended in this study, the grass median may have benefits that include:

- The better definition of a left turn lane where needed and necessary for driveways, access roads and county road intersections.
- The median can serve as a snow storage area and provide a snow barrier to prevent head-on crashes during winter and slippery conditions.
- U.S 2 between Ironwood and Wakefield has numerous scenic vies and vistas of the surrounding landscape, rock bluffs and hills. A grass median will improve visual context in this scenic area that serves as a gateway to Michigan for many visitors to the western Upper Peninsula.

Figure 33. US-2



### Define the left turn lanes at Powderhorn and Grandview Roads

The intersections at Powderhorn and Grandview Roads have a higher incidence of crashes and safety problems than other rural intersections in the study area. It is recommended that the left turn lanes be better defined to improve safety.

### Improve the Rail Grade Trail for Bicycles and Pedestrians

One of the two rail grades that parallel U.S. 2 through the study area should be considered for all season non-motorized use. Pedestrians and bicyclists would be attracted to this trail. This project could have dramatic economic development/tourism implications for Gogebic County.

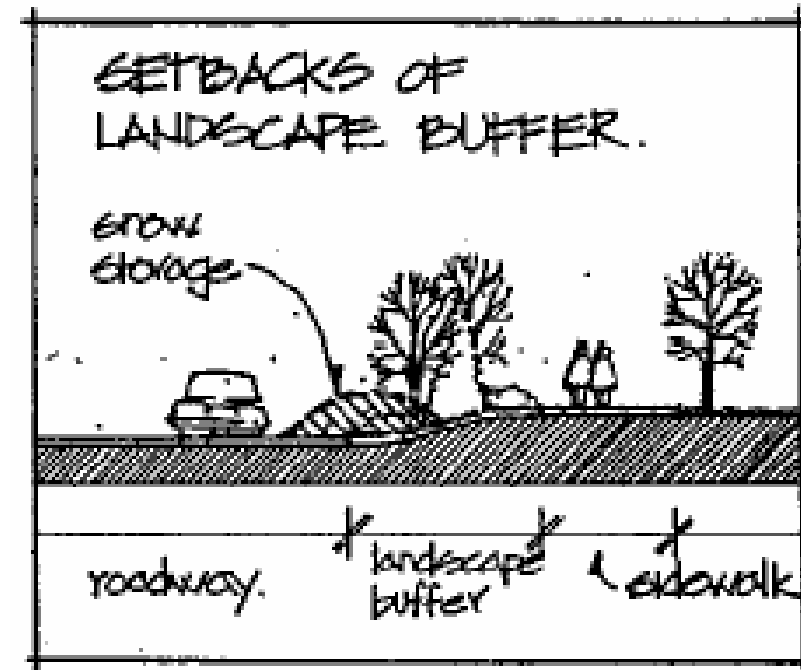
### Sidewalks in urbanized areas

In the cities of Ironwood and Bessemer, sidewalks should be constructed and maintained along the U.S. 2 corridor. In both cities, U.S. 2 runs through the community and separates residential neighborhoods. More people are walking for exercise and to patronize businesses. Separation between the walkway and the street is desirable, particularly for winter maintenance and pedestrian comfort.

### Maintain paved shoulder for bicycles and pedestrians in the rural U.S. 2 segments

A paved shoulder currently exists along the rural segments of U.S. 2. The paved shoulder is used by pedestrians and bicycling and should be maintained in future U.S 2 improvement projects.

Figure 34. Street Section



### **Site plan review**

Each local government participating in this study should adopt site plan review provisions within their zoning ordinance for commercial and industrial projects. Currently, only the City of Ironwood has this tool. Through site plan review, cities and townships can greatly affect the site plan quality, appearance and traffic safety of individual development projects.

### **Access Management Ordinance**

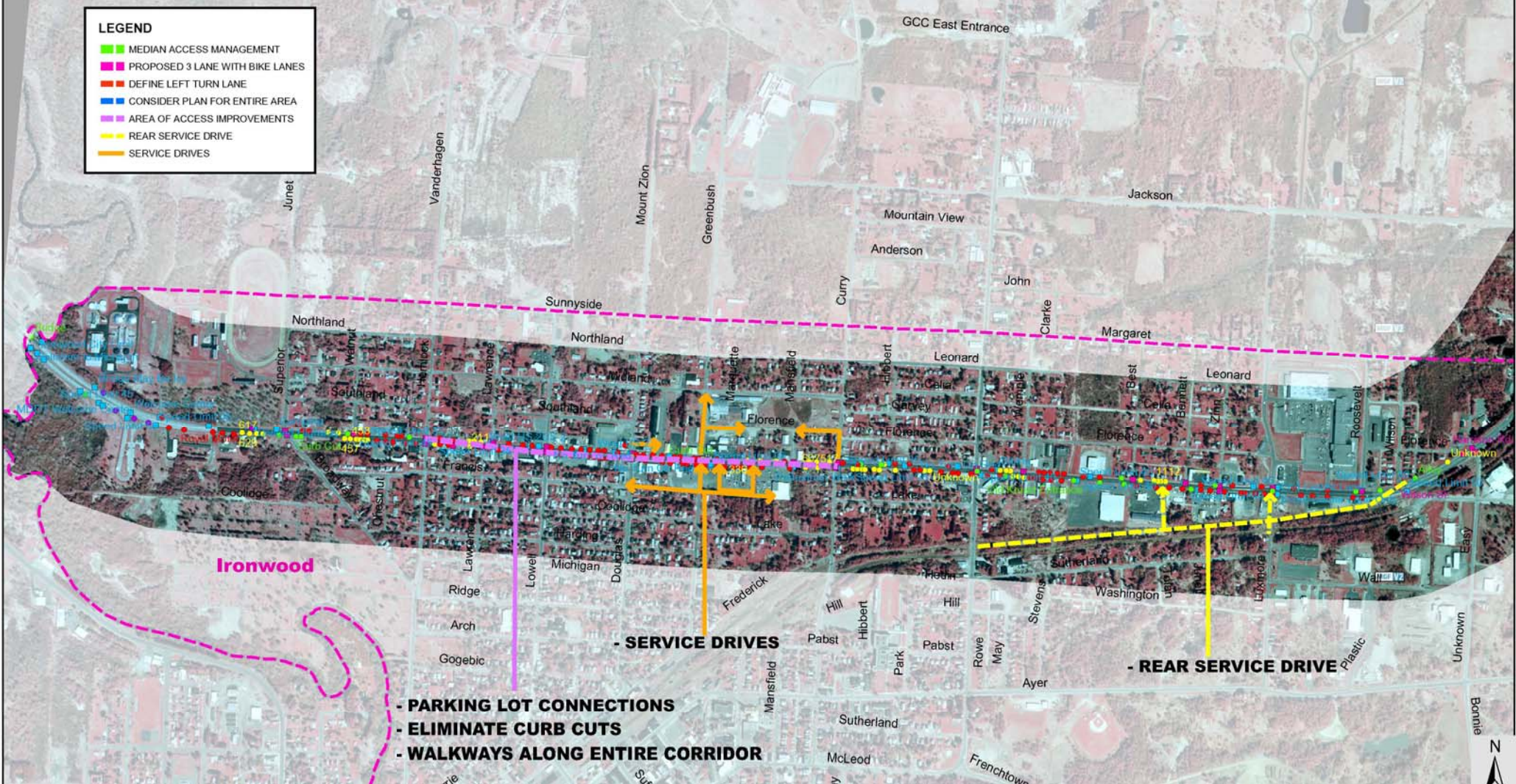
An Access Management Ordinance is proposed for adoption by each participating local government. Through this mechanism, coordination of the approval of driveway permitting is accomplished, as well as affecting the number of driveways allowed per parcel of land. The goal is to reduce the number of driveways and curb-cuts, their locations, and to coordinate the approval process between the community, a proposed intergovernmental committee, the Gogebic County Road Commission (local road authority) and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

**Figure 35. US-2**





Figure 36. US-2 IRONWOOD CORRIDOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – CITY OF IRONWOOD





**Figure 37. US-2 IRONWOOD CORRIDOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – IRONWOOD TOWNSHIP**

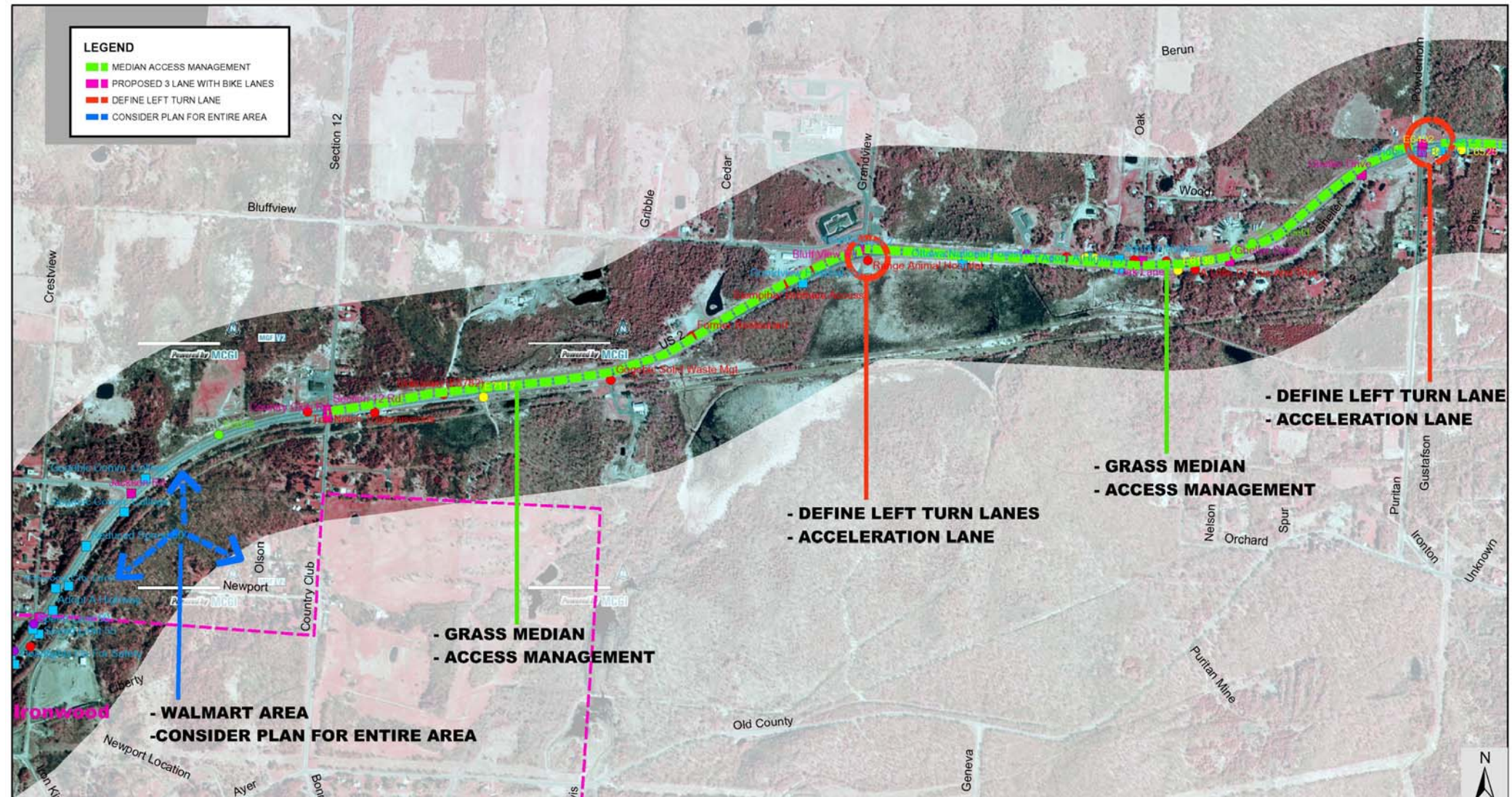




Figure 38. US-2 IRONWOOD CORRIDOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – CITY OF BESSEMER

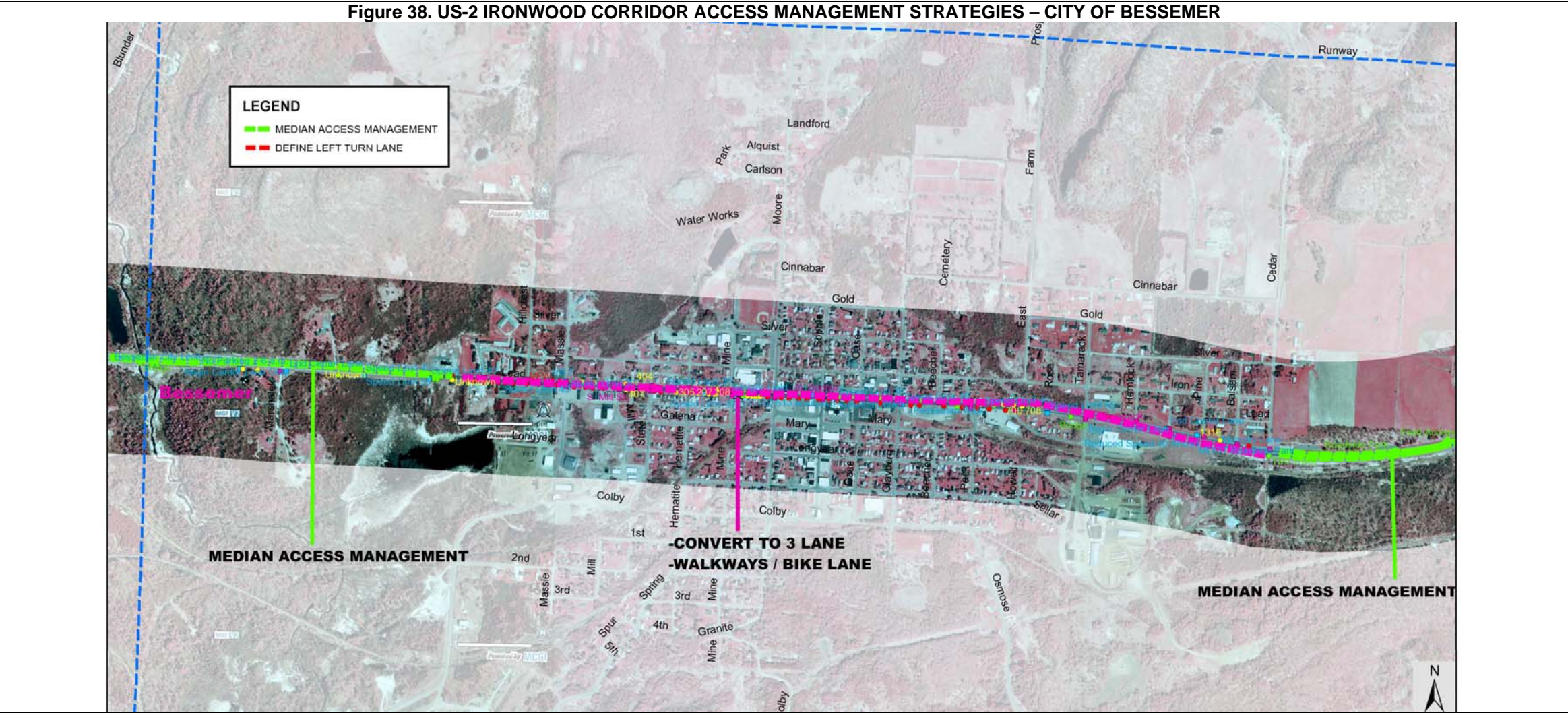




Figure 39. US-2 IRONWOOD CORRIDOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – BESSEMER TOWNSHIP

